[P. 377, B]

764 this inevitability. It is less than surprising then that
[178] changes in attitudes and rituals surrounding death
among the Washo have changed very slowly. The only
[177] changes which appear to have developed in Washo death
customs are those imposed by direct intervention of
the whites or as unavoidable consequences of changes
in other aspects of the culture.

968 In the past, when a person died the house in which
he expired was abandoned by his family. Of course, if
[342] the death occurred in the spring or summer such aban-
[224] donment was simple; during these seasons the Washo
usually lived in simple brush shelters. A winter death
was a more serious matter; it was during this season
that the Washo lived in the gal'sdaq'l—a structure
made to last through the winter and until the next
[342] winter, when it was reoccupied. Valley Washo often
made these winter homes of brush or tules. In the
foothills and mountains, bark slabs and tree limbs
were utilized. If an occupant died, this home must be
abandoned and was often burned down, and the immedi-
ate family moved to another campsite. Thus a family
which suffered no deaths during the winters might
spend several years in a single campground, whereas
a less fortunate family might have to move every
winter, or even oftener than that.

342 A few Washo began building simple rectangular
178 board and batten houses in the 1890's. Most of the
others continued to live in gal'sdaq'l made of boards
and scrap, begged, stolen, or purchased from the lum-
[657] ber mills which were quite numerous in the area at
the beginning of the century. In the 1930's, when most
of the Washo moved into the "colonies" established for
them by the government, the native-style houses were
764 abandoned in favor of the wooden homes built by the
768 government. No longer permitted to move about the
178 country at will, and frankly unwilling to abandon the
more comfortable white-style houses, the Washo ad-
[656] justed their death customs. The most common adjust-
ment was to prepare for an impending death by shift-
ing seriously ill persons into an adjoining structure,
often a shack built in the native manner or a shed or
lean-to. This structure could be burned down without
loss when its inhabitant died.[7]

[775] The Washo viewed this destruction of a house occu-
pied by a dead person as simply preventing his spirit
from bothering the living.

764 Most Washo death customs display a conscious at-
[114] tempt to avoid association with the dead. Barrett re-
ports that cremation was practiced, and the bones
placed in a stream to prevent their desecration. How-
ever, this appears to have been only one of the dis-
posal customs and is not well remembered by Washo
living today. The burning or burying of the personal
possessions of the dead was common. Certain prized
possessions were interred with the body, which was
usually wrapped in a shroud of matting, deerskin, or
bearhide and placed in a fissure or cave in the moun-
tains. Although there are a number of locations known
[177] by both Indians and local whites as old burying grounds,
all my informants agreed that in the "real old days"
there was no special cemetery and that these burial
spots have developed since the coming of the white
man. This may well have been as a result of direct
white interference with native funeral customs and an
insistence that Indians concentrate their burials. Some
of these sites have become traditional among the Washo.

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[7] The willingness of the Washo to send gravely ill persons to the hospi-
tal seems in part motivated by the wish to avoid a death in the house.

Trade

Trade and gift exchange were not clearly separate in Washo society. However, the language does distinguish between sharing (mib$^{\varphi}$shigihi) and trading (damalu).[1] In trade there tended to be immediate reciprocation while gift exchange often involved a time lapse. Trade also tended to be competitive and to increase with less intensive social ties. Trade involved explicit negotiation and social status was secondary as a factor in the transaction. Trade involved an impersonal relation which focused on the economic goods rather than upon the social relations of persons involved.

Washo trade was an estimated one or two percent of the total distribution. Four types of trade are recognized: (1) silent, without face-to-face interaction; (2) personal, where personal ties are relatively important; (3) administered, based on governmental rules; and (4) market, which is relatively free from personal and governmental ties. Washo trade in this framework was "personal".

Hank Pete maintained that women would often trade under circumstances in which men would ordinarily give gifts. Trade proceeded with little haggling. The transaction was initiated by either a buyer or a seller. It took the form of propositions, questions, and answers such as "I'll trade you this for that. This one? No, that one! I need more for that one. Then I'll include this, too. We can trade then." Trade with non-Washo was conducted through gestures and a few key words understood by both parties, such as damalu for "trade".

The Washo lacked rigid standards of reference, that is, the valuation of two materials to be traded in terms of a third material. Goods were traded without reference to their value in other goods and without a traditional exchange rate. For this reason it was difficult to collect data on equivalencies of value or rates of exchange.

From descriptions of actual transactions, and by insisting on some relative values of objects, the following scale was established by this writer. Hank Pete said that rabbit nets were never traded. They were too valuable. Many things, because of tradition or personal desires, were not traded. Such things might be a shaman's paraphernalia, a bow that had killed a number of deer, or food and clothing needed for survival. Freed and Freed (n.d., 10) state that the loss or destruction of a shaman's curing implements was a cause of illness to the shaman.

Certain things were near the top of the value scale. A double rabbit skin blanket, a large coiled water tight cooking basket (giuleu), a whole buck deer, and three tanned deer skins were roughly equal in value. Hank Pete said he had never heard of anyone who had three tanned deer skins, and a

1. A loan word from Miwok, according to William H. Jacobsen, Jr. (personal communication).